

Revelation 5 – Lamb Power

New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham reminds us that the first-century readers of Revelation were “constantly confronted with powerful images of the Roman vision of the world.” Buildings, statues, rituals and festivals all “provided powerful visual impressions” of an idolatrous way of life. The imagery of the Revelation uses a literary palate of images from the Old Testament intended to refurbish our imaginations “with alternative visions of how the world is and will be.”

Warm Up Question

- What was the best choir or musical group you ever heard (or participated in)? What was memorable about it?

Discovering the Word

- 1) **Read Revelation 5.** On what and who is the focus of attention in vv.1-4. What do you think makes the scroll so significant?¹
- 2) Why is John so distraught that no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll? What difference would it make if someone was found who could open it?
- 3) Given the elders’ words to John (v.5) what did John expect to see? What does he actually see (v.6)?
- 4) Where is the “Lamb” located on the stage of heaven, and what does it say about him? Why is the Lamb the only one worthy to open the scroll (v.9; Jn. 1²⁹)?
- 5) What are the identity markers and titles used to describe Christ? What implications & applications can be drawn from these?
- 6) What does this uniquely worthy one do (v.7) and what response does he get?
- 7) What similarities & differences are there between chs. 4 & 5? (the actors, their actions, centre stage, songs)
- 8) Compare & contrast the elders’ song of 4¹¹ and their “new song” in 5⁹⁻¹⁰? (e.g. cat
- 9) What does the angels’ song say about the Lamb? Who and what is the creatures’ song about (v.13)? What effect do you think this scene had on John? What effect does it have on you?
- 10) Notice the depths of despair in 5⁴ and the heights of delight by 5¹⁴. What was the turning point in the scene? the turning point in your life?
- 11) Try making a new song/poem/prayer from the ancient ones.

A New Song

The power of a Lion but gentle as a Lamb.
Worthy of all honor and glory, yet
Willing to be dishonorably discharged, for us.
For us, you absorbed the onslaught of evil,
For us you paid the ultimate price,
For us, for us, unworthy ones.
Embraced by the worthy one we were.
So we give you thanks and praise and honor
For ever and ever, AMEN.

¹ In the ancient world, a sealed scroll was a very important document (e.g. Ex. 17¹⁴; 1 Sam. 10²⁵; Ezra 6²) and when it recorded a vision from God it contained His plans (e.g. Isa. 29¹¹; 30⁸; Jer. 36²⁻³²; Ezek. 2⁹⁻¹⁰). For a scroll to be double sided was unusual and suggests that it was “filled to overflowing” and “contains the full account of what God in his sovereign will has determined as the destiny of the world.” Robert Mounce, Revelation (NICNT), p. 142.